

Towards Equality, Diversity + Inclusion

Our Vision.

An equitable, diverse and inclusive artistic and social space, buzzing with ideas and experimentation.

A space that connects people in creative processes that engage with the messiness of lived experiences, and question the status quo.



project

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This section outlines our vision, location and mission as well as the key values that inform all of our work. It also sets out our understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the arts, and the policies and documents that have influenced our thinking. It describes the process we undertook in order to develop this policy and references the wide range of people we consulted.

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1. Background and Context:

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Where we are: Located in the heart of Dublin City, Project Arts Centre is a physical and conceptual space where the contemporary arts are created and experienced, both on-site, and in locations across Ireland and the world.

Our mission is to be a vibrant, welcoming hub that connects a broad diversity of artists, audiences and local communities¹, promoting exchange, experimentation and collaboration, and the presentation of extraordinary work that inspires and provokes.



¹ We recognise that many belong to all of these groups simultaneously and at different moments in time

1. Background and Context

Key values that inform all of our work are:

- **The arts are essential** – for many of us, the arts make up the air we breathe and the way we make sense of the world.
- **The arts are transformative** – artists help to shape social and political consciousness
- Project Arts Centre is inspired by **contemporary, passionate, courageous voices from all parts of our diverse society** – and it is important that we reflect this, not just in our programming but also in our organisational make-up.
- **Trust** is the foundation stone on which creative relationships are built, and trust takes care, respect and time
- **Notions of quality and excellence in the arts are in constant motion** and need continual interrogation; the status quo is not an option
- **Partnership** – we are limited when we work on our own; we need to share knowledge, experience and skills for mutual benefit
- **Flexibility** assists Project to operate as a nimble, learning organisation
- There is a big world of artistic practice out there and we are enriched by **international influences and ideas**
- **Creative experimentation and risk make our hearts race and can inform creative practice** – even if things don't always work out as expected.

In relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, we believe that:

- **Resources are not equally accessible** – opportunities to benefit from publicly funded arts resources are not equally shared. Informal networks exist among those of us who manage arts resources and this can mean the same cohorts of makers, audience members, or workers benefit, while others are excluded.
- **Addressing inequality is both our responsibility and our opportunity** – as with all arts organisations in receipt of public funding, we must develop strategies to connect with the widest diversity of artists and audiences, not only as a means of addressing inequality but also as a means of constantly reenergising the artforms in which we work
- **The way in which inequality is experienced is complex and intersectional**, and our understandings of inequality are constantly changing. We need to monitor all aspects of our language, programming and operations on an ongoing basis to ensure we stay up to date with current thinking, and open to new connections and ways of working.
- **It is all about the structures** – for real change to happen, it needs to be structural; we need to see our commitment to diversity reflected in the makeup of our Board, staff, and membership, as well as in our partnerships and connections with artists, audiences and local communities.

1. Background and Context

- **Change requires investment** – to deliver our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, we will need to invest in time, staffing, and other resources, and in the artists and communities on whose expertise we draw. Without such an investment the policy will become a token gesture.
- **Change requires flexibility** – things move on and thinking changes; in order to be effective, we need to remain open and flexible with this policy, taking feedback and responding to new ideas.
- **Communication is key** – while we have developed some exciting equality, diversity and inclusion programmes and facilities in the past, we have not always communicated them clearly; in order to reach a broader cohort of artists and publics, we need to up our communication game.



This policy, *Towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (TEDI)*, takes account of the Arts Council's *Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy and Strategy* as well as current legislation including the employment Equality Acts (1998 – 2015) and the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018) and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, otherwise known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. We are cognisant of the discrimination often experienced by artists, audiences and arts workers in terms of age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background.

TEDI has been developed at a time when Project Arts Centre's next five-year strategy (2022 – 2026) is also under consideration by the Board and Executive. The commitments in this new policy will be threaded through all aspects of the new strategy, which will be published before the end of the year.

TEDI is largely shaped by the series of recommendations made by an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Panel, established in March 2021². From the outset, the Panel were asked to give particular consideration to four priority areas and some of panel members facilitated focus group discussions to this end. The four prioritised areas were: Sexuality and Gender Diversity; Disability; Socio-Economic Background; and Cultural Diversity³. The full report from the Advisory Panel can be read at bit.ly/PanelRecsTEDI It is an important document that sits alongside this policy. The report goes into specific details that underpin the broader policy commitments here.

² The names of the Advisory Panel members can be found in Appendix One

³ The inclusion of people who identify across these 'four prioritised areas' is flagged throughout the implementation plan

1. Background and Context

A Note on Language:

Words can mean different things to different people so we have spelled out what we mean when we use the following terms:

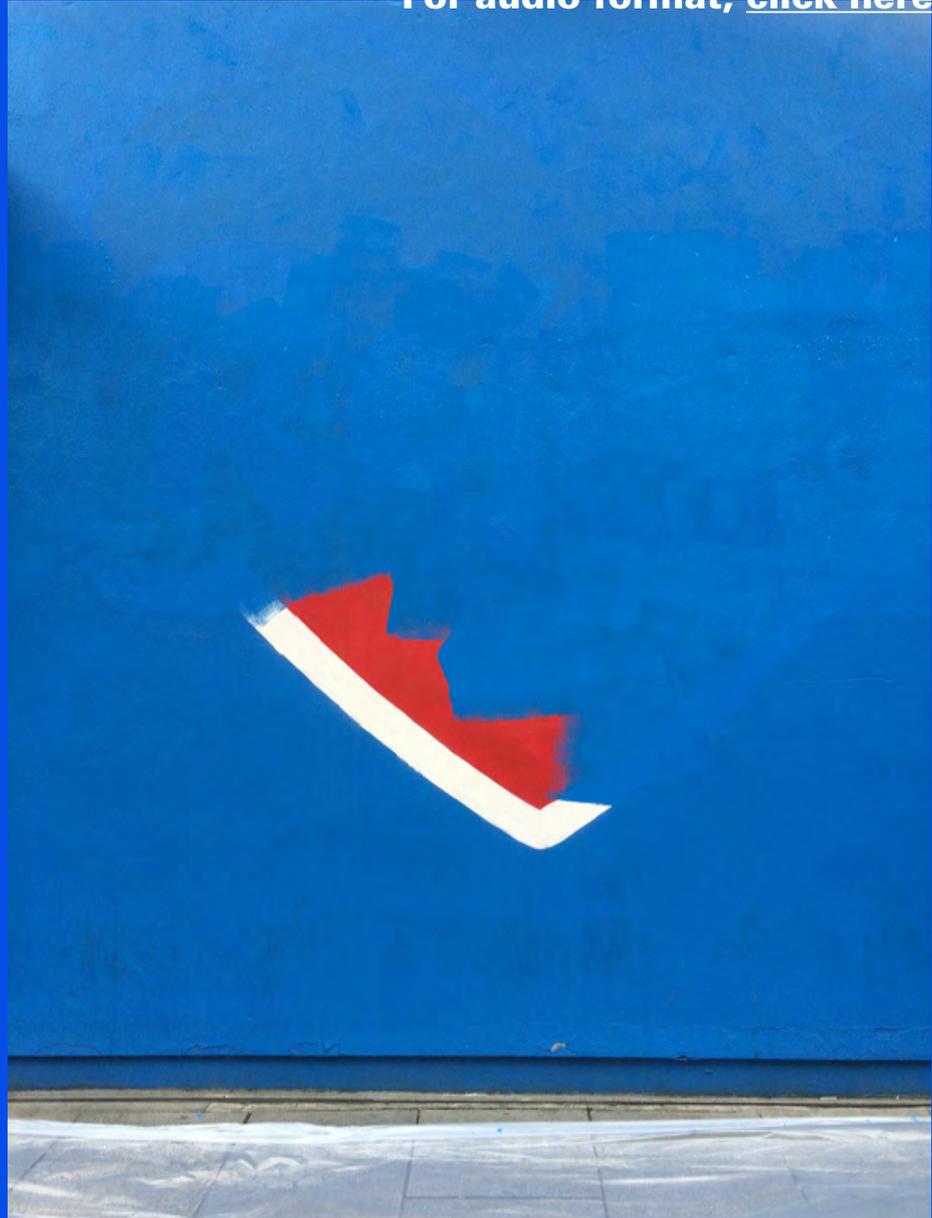
We see **Equality** as an outcome, towards which we are working – a world where people have the same access to opportunities and resources regardless of their identity or background. However, we also see clearly that the world is not equal, and resources cannot always be shared in equal measure if we want a fair outcome. We understand **Equity** to be integral to the process of being fair.

We understand **Diversity** to be a recognition of the wide range of perspectives, approaches, practices and lived experience that co-exist in society. In the context of our work, we see Diversity as an enrichment of everything we do. We see homogeneity as the enemy of creativity.

We understand **Inclusion** to be the practice of welcoming Diversity in all we do. When we talk about an inclusive organisation, we are talking of a structure and a culture that is flexible, responsive and increasingly reflective of the many different identities and perspectives in the world around us.



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2. Our Commitment:

***Towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (TEDI)* confirms Project's commitment to becoming a more equitable, diverse and inclusive space (physically and conceptually), with an increasingly transparent structure and a wider breadth of partnerships and connections.**

Our actions to make this possible will be in four areas:

i. The Organisation

We will:

- Focus on structural change, developing strategies to further diversify the Membership, Board and staff, in line with the diverse make up of society in Dublin and Ireland, and in a transparent manner.
- Require all members of the staff, Membership and Board to become familiar with the values and commitments in *TEDI* and to work towards its effective implementation.
- Require all artists and companies working in the building or in partnership with Project to familiarise themselves with the *TEDI* policy and consider any potential implications for the work they plan to make / present with Project.

ii. The Building

We will:

- Take 'hospitality' as a philosophical starting point, making changes to the layout, lighting, signage and décor in the space so it is experienced as a warmer, more welcoming and vibrant space by everyone, even within the limitations of its current industrial design (which we also love)
- Commission a masterplan, to enable us to explore possibilities for bigger changes to the fabric and layout of the building as a means of improving access, enlivening social spaces, and extending the facilities currently available to artists, staff, audiences and communities living locally.

iii. Our Connections with Artists, Communities and Audiences

We will:

- Broaden our reach to artists beyond our existing networks by experimenting with more diverse approaches to developing, curating and programming work, locally and internationally.
- Broaden our reach and deepen our engagement with audiences and local communities including some long-term engagements that facilitate the development of trust over time.

iv. Our Language and Communications

We will:

- Connect with key resource organisations to assist us in regularly reviewing language and communications in line with best practice as it evolves.
- Provide training and encourage ongoing dialogue so we become more conscious of how we speak with and about people, and how we communicate online and through our systems for booking tickets, participating in programmes, providing feedback etc.
- We will review and constantly monitor our communications in relation to access across all areas of our work.



3. Our Plan for Change.

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1. The Organisation

a. Structural Change

Commitments

We will focus on structural change, developing strategies to further diversify the Membership, Board and staff, in line with the diverse make up of society in Dublin and Ireland, and in a transparent manner.

Actions

We will continue to review & refresh the Board and Membership in a strategic way that prioritises diversity and inclusion. (Starting early 2022).

We will tap into the increasingly rich pool of expertise and experience within the Membership to help shape the organisation into the future. (Starting Late 2021).

We will review recruitment procedures for staff across all parts of the organisation, and will work with key partners to reach candidates beyond traditional networks when jobs are advertised. (Starting Late 2021).

We will review communications around Membership, Board and Staff recruitment, ensuring the information is clear and easy to find on the website. (Initial review to be completed by Late 2021).

Desired Outcome

Membership, Board and staff will better reflect the diverse makeup of society, with particular focus on the four prioritised areas in this policy.

Members will have a stronger sense of ownership and agency, and more opportunities to advocate for the organisation.

The working environment at Project will be enriched by a broader range of knowledge, skills and lived experience

Both the people already involved in Governance and those who are not yet strongly connected to the organisation, will better understand the processes and criteria for becoming a member, joining the Board, or getting a job at Project, and the nature of roles involved.

b. Implementing Policy

Commitments

We will require all members of the staff, Membership and Board to become familiar with the values and commitments in *TEDI* and to work towards its effective implementation.

Actions

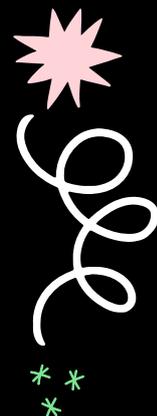
We will disseminate the *TEDI* policy and ensure it becomes a regular agenda item at meetings of Membership, Board and Staff. (Starting immediately).

We will review and evaluate the outcomes of *TEDI* on a regular basis and identify areas where additional measures are required. (Detailed timeline for monitoring and evaluation in Section 4).

We will resource the commitments in *TEDI* with staff time and money, building costs into our annual budget as core priorities. (Starting immediately).

Desired Outcome

We will continue to deliver on the priorities outlined in *TEDI* – not as a once off project but as an ongoing piece of work over the next five years.





c. Artists

Commitments

We will require all artists and companies working in the building or in partnership with Project to familiarise themselves with the *TEDI* policy and consider any potential implications for the work they plan to make / present in Project.

Actions

We will send the *TEDI* policy to all artists and companies, and the Artistic Director and Curator of Visual Arts will discuss key values and aims as part of the negotiation / planning process. (Starting late 2021).

We will review our induction information and processes for companies when they arrive in the building. (Starting late 2021).

Desired Outcome

Visiting artists and partners will be clear about the values of care and respect prioritised by Project, which will enable us to work together to plan for greater access to the work, and avoid the use of inappropriate or derogatory language, cultural appropriation or exploitation.

2. The Building

a. Hospitality

Commitments

We will take 'hospitality' as a philosophical starting point, making changes to the layout, lighting, signage and décor so that Project is experienced as a warmer, more welcoming and vibrant space by everyone, even within the limitations of its current industrial design (which we also love)

Actions

We will review the exterior of the building along with the lower foyer area and initiate changes in the short term to lighting, signage and décor. (Starting late 2021).

In particular, we will pay attention to the bathroom facilities including a review of signage, infrastructure, and access requirements around gender neutral bathrooms (including the provision of sanitary bins), and improved baby changing facilities. (Starting late 2021).

We will develop new feedback mechanisms for people using the building. (Starting late 2021).

Desired Outcome

A more welcoming environment for everyone coming into the building, with a more overt welcome to those using it as a meeting place, particularly if they are not already familiar with Project.





b. Masterplan

Commitments

We will commission a masterplan, which will enable us to explore possibilities for bigger changes to the fabric and layout of the building as a means of improving access, enlivening social spaces, and extending the facilities currently available to artists, staff, audiences and communities living locally.

Actions

We will work with architectural / design consultants to audit and improve access in all parts of the building and develop more flexible working and social spaces. We will focus particularly on improvements to backstage access and the provision of quiet spaces in the building when required. (Starting October 2021 with subsequent funding applications for capital works from 2022 - 2025)

Desired Outcome

Improved access and comfort for all artists, communities, staff and audiences using the building.

3. Our Connections With Artists, Communities And Audiences



a. Artists

Commitments

We will broaden our reach to artists beyond our existing networks by experimenting with more diverse approaches to developing, curating and programming work, locally and internationally.

Actions

We will review programming and research practices to challenge our assumed notions about quality and ensure we continually refresh the range of experiences and views that permeate the programme. (Starting Jan 2022).

We will invite new relationships with artists from diverse community and linguistic backgrounds through: collaborative approaches to commissioning, making, and presenting work; open calls; digital platforms; the use of accessible application formats; and increased support for informal daytime events, online initiatives and under-represented artforms and practices. (Starting Jan 2022).

We will review our current Artist Supports programme and identify ways in which a more diverse cohort of artists can be supported. (Starting Spring 2022).

Desired Outcome

A broader range of local and international artists with more diverse lived experience, presenting work across a wider range of disciplines.

A more dynamic and radical programme

A programme that utilises different spaces in the building and locations across the city, as well as the online space.

A programme that offers opportunities during the day as well as at night.

b. Communities & Audiences

Commitments

We will broaden our reach and deepen our engagement with audiences and local communities

Actions

We will extend the range of invitations to participate in programmes in and out of the building, focusing particularly on the four priority areas outlined in TEDI. These will include both short and long term partnerships / collaborative community programmes, schools' engagement programmes, open call initiatives and digital platforms. (Starting late 2021).

We will formalise and extend our mentoring supports for a broader range of artists and communities making arts funding applications. (Starting Jan 2022).

We will increase daytime tours of the building (outside of shows and events) so that communities become familiar with the space. (Starting Spring 2022).

We will establish an Annual Open Day for artists and communities to engage with the space and the staff. (Spring / Summer 2022).

We will review systems for ticket pricing. While we already have a number of artist and community discounts built in, we will explore possibilities for extending these further. (Starting early 2022).

Desired Outcome

An organisation that is better connected to the local community

A wider more varied audience base across both free and paid programming

An organisation that is a hub for many different people to meet, engage with the contemporary arts and socialise

A more diverse cohort who would call Project 'home'.

4. Our Language And Communication

a. Ongoing Review

Commitments

We will connect with key arts and civil society resource organisations (particularly in the four prioritised areas) to assist us in regularly reviewing language and communications in line with best practice, as it evolves.

Actions

We will engage with key resource organisations such as Arts & Disability Ireland (ADI); Gay Community News (GCN) and Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group (BTDG) to begin with, to disseminate relevant publications among Board and staff for discussion and awareness raising. We will use these resources in reviewing aspects of language e.g. the use of pronouns in emails and social media as well as gender identification requests in forms. (Starting late 2021).

We will build a learning network with other local arts organisations to share information and learn from each other's experience. (Starting early 2022).

Desired Outcome

People from diverse backgrounds will feel valued and respected and free to self-identify in their dealings with Project

People from diverse backgrounds will not feel the onus to educate Project staff about language.

Learning will be shared among a network of arts organisations.



b. Training

Commitments

We will provide training for staff and encourage ongoing dialogue so we become more conscious of how we speak with and about people, and how we communicate online and through our systems for booking tickets, participating in programmes, providing feedback etc.

Actions

Staff will participate in relevant training on an ongoing basis. (Starting late 2021).

Desired Outcome

Staff will be better informed and better equipped to communicate sensitively and effectively, and will feel more confident to ask questions, seek clarification, or seek out further training as required.

c. Communicating Access

Commitments

We will review and constantly monitor our communications in relation to access across all areas of our work.

Actions

We will review the Access page on the website ensuring it is easy to find, describes clearly the access features and services available, and offers the information in alternative formats such as video / audio / ISL / captions / audio description and easy-read. (Starting late 2021).

We will commission and publish online a new 'Social Story', explaining how to get to and move through the building. (To be completed by the end of 2021).

We will engage with a panel of users to test website accessibility in conjunction with the Communications team and web designers. (Starting late 2021).

We will review our communication of artistic and participation programming and how people can get involved. (Late 2021).

We will review our policy for paying artists and ensure that our approach to access costs is communicated clearly. (Late 2021).

Desired Outcome

People will easily find the information they need to make their experience in / with Project more comfortable, with fewer barriers to programmes, facilities and services.

We will have expanded networks and improved systems for testing accessibility on an ongoing basis

People will have a clearer understanding of the different routes to working as an artist in Project or participating in public programming.

Artists requiring additional funds for access will have a clearer understanding of the financial supports available.

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4. Monitoring and Evaluation.

This policy has come from a year long process of reflection and discussion with Board, Staff and Project Membership, and with significant input from an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Panel and associated focus groups. The policy is not an end in itself; rather it is a fresh commitment to an important piece of work ahead. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the policy, we have developed the following plan for monitoring and evaluating progress over the life of our new strategy (2022 – 2026), which is due to be published later this year.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

A TEDI sub-committee will be established. It will be made up of executive, Board and Members. The sub-committee will oversee the following plan for monitoring and evaluation:

- Staff will reflect upon and report on their progress on an ongoing basis in weekly staff meetings and as part of feedback sessions on individual projects or events. Staff will also engage in a more formal evaluation process, which will be documented, twice a year over the next five years.
- At Board level, there will be a progress report on the policy roll out of TEDI at every Board meeting (at least 6 times a year) and it will be an agenda item in the annual review and planning sessions. At these sessions, the Board will evaluate whether the aims and objectives of the policy are being achieved or whether additional measures are required.
- There will be a report on the implementation of TEDI at the Membership's annual colloquium (held each summer) over the life of the next strategy, for the purpose of discussion and feedback.
- A progress report will feature in the Project Arts Centre Annual Report each year over the next five years. On at least two occasions during this period (mid-way and again at the end of our next five-year strategy) we will invite feedback from artists and the public (including members of the Advisory Panel) and document this for consideration and further action.

Appendix One

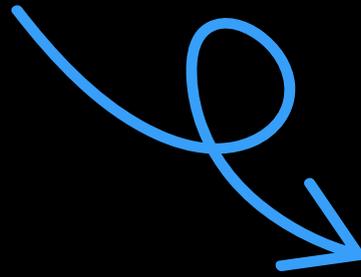


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Members of the EDI Advisory Panel:

- **Rob Farhat**
PAC Board member | Independent Music Artist
- **Veronica Dyas**
Independent Theatre Artist
- **Pádraig Naughton**
Arts & Disability Ireland - Director
[Focus Group Facilitator]
- **Maïa Nunes**
Co-founder of Origins Eile & Independent Multidisciplinary Artist
[Focus Group Facilitator]
- **Tobi Omoteso**
Independent Dance Artist and Director of Top 8 Festival
[Focus Group Co-Facilitator]
- **Catherine Joyce**
Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group - Manager
[Focus Group Co-Facilitator]
- **Lisa Connell**
GCN Managing Editor
- **Aideen Barry**
Independent Visual Artist
- **Shaun Dunne**
PAC Theatre Artist
[Focus Group Facilitator]

Towards Equality, Diversity + Inclusion



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

More than just a venue, Project Arts Centre is a registered charity that has been dedicated to supporting artists and protecting the next generation of Irish artists across all forms of the performing and visual arts for the past 50 years.

projectartscentre.ie

